

# NEWS

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## CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PROVIDES DISASTER ASSISTANCE TO LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS IN NEW MEXICO

Washington, D.C. December 31, 1997 Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger today announced that USDA will provide emergency relief to help feed an estimated 181,000 livestock stranded in New Mexico due to unusually severe snow storms.

Under the Foundation Livestock Relief Program (FLRP), USDA will help producers provide feed for livestock in New Mexico where cattle and sheep are stranded or unaccounted for following successive snowstorms and severe low temperatures which hit the state from December 20-25.

"These unusual storms have created dangerous conditions for livestock in New Mexico, and USDA is committed to helping when and where we can," said Rominger. "Herds are especially vulnerable now, as many of the cows are carrying calves, and undue stress could cause many to abort, diminishing the calf crop in the spring."

Because of the severe weather conditions, livestock in 8 New Mexico counties are unable to access their normal feed supplies. Producers have been unable to truck-in additional feed due to heavy and drifting snow. At least 7,500 animals are dead, and up to 181,000 more, including 113,000 head of cattle and 68,000 sheep, are at risk if they don't get feed immediately.

FEMA, USDA, and the National Guards from the states of Oklahoma, Wyoming, Texas, and New Mexico are working together to airlift hay to stranded livestock, but cattle stranded away from feed sources are expected to continue to be a problem for the next several days. Due to the severity of the problem, USDA will bear 30 percent of the cost of meeting this short-term emergency need for feed, up to a maximum of \$50 per ton of feed.

Producers will have to present purchase receipts to receive benefits. Only receipts reflecting purchases from December 24, 1997 through January 3, 1998 will be accepted. The assistance is limited to foundation herd and replacement livestock in Chaves, De Baca, Guadalupe, Lincoln, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, and Torrance counties and contiguous counties in which the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation determines livestock are stranded due to this disaster. Livestock producers interested in applying for this program should contact their Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. Producers who are unable to reach their county office and are making application over the New Years holiday weekend should contact the FSA desk at the disaster command post in Santa Fe, New Mexico at (505) 476-9600.

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